



Sustainable Communities in Metro Boston MAPC's approach and call for partners – July 1, 2010

A new federal grant program known as the *Sustainable Communities Initiative* provides Metro Boston with the opportunity to apply for up to \$5 million to support regional planning and sustainable development. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is convening a consortium of cities, towns, nonprofits, business interests, and funders to pursue this opportunity. We envision an application that supports smart growth planning and catalytic projects in a limited number of localities, as well as state and regional policy work to encourage sustainable growth and preservation all across the region. ***We are seeking consortium partners, supporters, and ideas for a competitive application that will benefit the entire Greater Boston Region.***

The federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities—comprising HUD, DOT, and EPA—is working to coordinate policies and programs so that federal investments advance equity and sustainability. The Partnership's \$100 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program will provide up to \$5 million for “metropolitan and multi-jurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments.” The program will support a range of activities from regional visioning to implementation planning and pre-development. The complete Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is available at www.mapc.org/sustainablecommunities, and a summary is attached. **Applications are due on August 23, 2010.** The NOFA states, “an eligible applicant is a multijurisdictional and multi-sector partnership consisting of a consortium of government entities and non-profit partners.”

(Also in June, HUD and DOT issued a \$75 million joint solicitation for Community Challenge Planning Grants and TIGER II Planning Grants, both of which are open to municipal applicants. MAPC is eager to learn more about and support local applicants to that program. A brief summary is available at the [MAPC Sustainable Communities web page](#). Pre-applications for that grant program are due on July 26.)

Metro Boston is uniquely positioned to take advantage of the Regional Planning Grant Program because it **already has a regional vision and plan consistent with the federal partnership's six Livability Principles.** “[MetroFuture: Making a Greater Boston Region](#)” is a bold and achievable plan to create a sustainable, equitable, and economically competitive Boston Region. The plan seeks to make efficient use of land, energy, and transportation investments by focusing growth in areas where development already exists. It protects our region's water, green spaces, and working farms. It strengthens regional competitiveness and personal opportunity through investments in education and job training, and it envisions healthy, diverse, and engaged communities across the region. MetroFuture was developed with the extensive participation of thousands of “plan builders”: residents, municipal officials, state agencies, businesses, community-based organizations, and institutional partners throughout the region.

MetroFuture's Implementation Strategies provide a comprehensive, long-term framework for building sustainable communities. [Hundreds of short- and long-term recommendations](#), organized into 13 distinct strategies, address land use, housing, jobs, transportation, education, health, energy, public safety and environmental protection, with actions for cities and towns, state government, and the private sector.

Other considerations for the application include:

- MAPC would like to identify a limited number of outstanding place-based activities in the application. This list should include a range of activities in both urban and suburban settings. Contingent on funding, additional locations and activities will be determined after the grant is received.
- The Regional Consortium should include municipalities from all four of Metro Boston's Community Types: Inner Core, Regional Urban Centers, Maturing Suburbs, and Developing Suburbs. The consortium should also include community-based organizations, educational institutions, foundations, business interests, and other stakeholders.
- The program, while focused on land use and transportation, will complement and leverage other allied initiatives in areas of education, workforce development, and public safety, all crucial to MetroFuture implementation.
- Civic engagement is be a central component of MAPC's activities at all levels, from neighborhood participation in planning decisions through advanced visualization tools to large-scale education and stakeholder development in support of state-level policy proposals.
- Performance metrics are a fundamental component of MetroFuture. MAPC is assessing progress in three ways: regional indicators to describe challenges and change in the region, MetroFuture implementation monitoring, and MAPC program evaluation.

**Summary of Partnership for Sustainable Communities and
HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative
Prepared by Metropolitan Area Planning Council
28 June, 2010**

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities was conceived to advance development patterns and infrastructure investment programs that achieve improved economic prosperity and healthy, environmentally sustainable, and opportunity-rich communities. Recognizing the fundamental role that public investment plays in achieving these outcomes, the Administration charged three agencies whose programs most directly impact the physical form of communities—HUD, DOT, and EPA—to lead the way in reshaping the role of the Federal Government in helping communities embrace a more sustainable future.

- HUD will take the lead in funding, evaluating and otherwise supporting integrative regional planning for sustainable development.
- DOT will focus on (a) building the capacity of transportation agencies to integrate their planning and investments into broader plans and action to promote sustainable development; and (b) investing in transportation infrastructure that directly supports sustainable development and livability principles, as discussed below.
- EPA will enhance its role as a provider of technical assistance and developer of environmental sustainability metrics and practices.

The three agencies have made a commitment to coordinate activities, integrate funding requirements and adopt a common set of performance metrics. The Partnership is a commitment by these three Federal agencies to work together to coordinate policies and programs in support of six Livability Principles:

1. Provide more transportation choices
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing
3. Enhance economic competitiveness
4. Support existing communities
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment
6. Value communities and neighborhoods

Sustainable Communities Initiative - Congress appropriated \$150 million to HUD for a Sustainability Initiative in FY10. The objective of this \$150 million initiative is improved coordination of transportation and housing investments that result in more regional and local sustainable development patterns, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and more transit accessible housing choices for residents. These funds will stimulate more integrated regional planning to guide state, metropolitan, and local decisions, investments, and reforms in land use, transportation and housing. The initiative has three components:

- \$100 million in ***Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants***, which will be a collaborative effort between HUD and the Department of Transportation (DOT), with an emphasis on recipients' capacity for long-term cross-jurisdictional partnerships, public and private engagement, and ability to integrate resources.
- \$40 million in ***Community Challenge Planning Grants***, which is a local complement to the broader regional plans to facilitate changes in local zoning and land use policy and practice. These grants, open to individual municipalities and groups of municipalities, seek to support local implementation of sustainable plans and coordinated transportation planning. HUD and DOT issued a joint solicitation for this program and the TIGER II planning grant program in June 2010.
- \$10 million for a ***joint HUD-DOT research*** effort designed to advance transportation and housing linkages. The research agenda includes tracking of housing and transportation expenditures by location; creating broader measures of affordability and metropolitan accessibility; evaluating location efficient mortgages and energy efficient mortgages; identifying best practices in transit-oriented development and affordable housing; establishing performance measures.

Summary of Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program
Prepared by Metropolitan Area Planning Council
30 June, 2010

“The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program will support metropolitan and multi-jurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of: (1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; (2) social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; (3) energy use and climate change; and (4) public health and environmental impact.”

- MAPC application website: www.mapc.org/sustainablecommunities
- HUD program website: www.hud.gov/sustainability
- \$100m in total grantmaking
- Large metropolitan regions (500,000+) eligible for up to \$5m; 3-year grant period
- 25% set aside for distribution in small metropolitan regions (<500,000); grants up to \$2m
- 20% leverage (not match) from other public, philanthropic and private sources, including in-kind; cash contributions may come from any combination of local, state, and/or federal funds and/or private and philanthropic contributions dedicated to the express purposes of the proposal.
- Eligible applicants are defined as a consortium that includes a grouping of governmental units, regional planning agencies, nonprofit organizations, and allied public and private sector partners
 - A consortium designates a lead applicant responsible for submitting the application to HUD, signing a cooperative agreement, and administering the program
 - A partnership agreement, memorandum of understanding, or other proof of commitment to work together must be submitted with the application, and must be executed by all consortium members.
 - The Consortium can establish its own governance structure that reflects the diversity of its partners and allows for maximum participation in decision-making
 - A final consortium agreement must be executed no later than 120 days after the effective start date of the grant agreement
- The NOFA defines a region as a geographic area that includes, but may be larger than:
 - The jurisdiction of a single MPO, or the jurisdictions of two or more adjacent MPOs
 - A Metropolitan or Micropolitan Statistical Area;
 - A Metropolitan Division in a CMSA with a population exceeding 7,000,000.
- All applicants achieving a specified threshold score in their application will qualify for **Preferred Sustainability Status**. Applicants that meet this criterion will secure potential points in a number of funding opportunities managed by other federal agencies such as HUD, DOT, and EPA.
- Staff from all three agencies will participate in the review of applications and the selection of grantees
- HUD will look favorably upon applicants who prioritize additional measures to advance civil rights
- Application must include a discussion of how the plan will affirmatively further fair housing.

Funding Category 1: Regional Plans for Sustainable Development

- Preparation of Regional Plans for Sustainable Development where such plans do not currently exist or where they need to be significantly revised or enhanced. (NOT APPLICABLE IN METRO BOSTON)

Funding Category 2: Detailed Execution Plans and Programs

Funds in this category would support efforts to fine-tune existing regional plans so that they address the full complement of Livability Principles in an integrated fashion, the preparation of more detailed execution plans for an adopted Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, and limited predevelopment planning activities for regionally significant and catalytic projects.

- changes to local zoning, building and energy codes; or land use, financing, and development policies;
- work with MPOs and state agencies to realign transportation investments;
- solidifying regional agreements for water, waste, and natural resource management;
- launching employment initiatives that support regional workforce needs and programs
- targeting hard-to-reach populations that create a better jobs/housing balance;
- identifying capital improvement costs and financing strategies for specific area, transit corridor, water/wastewater service, or regional affordable housing plans; and/or
- Formalize multijurisdictional agreements to implement a Regional Plan

Eligible Activities

1. Establish coordinated intergovernmental planning and secure agreements
2. Develop a comprehensive Regional Plan for Sustainable Development,
3. Identify immediate and long-term policies
4. Align infrastructure investment to ensure equitable land use planning
5. Ensure public decision-making and meaningful resident participation
6. Identify measures to track the progress toward creating sustainable communities
7. Strengthen management and decision-making capacities
8. Engage in site-specific planning and design of capital projects or programs
9. Preparation of administrative and regulatory measures
10. Legal studies and research related to state laws or local government charters or regulations
11. Technical planning studies

Program Outcomes

1. Creation of shared elements in regional transportation, housing, water, and air quality plans tied to local comprehensive land use and capital investment plans.
2. Aligned federal planning and investment resources that mirror the local and regional strategies for achieving sustainable communities.
3. Increased participation and decision-making in developing and implementing a long-range vision for the region by populations traditionally marginalized in public planning processes.
4. Reduced social and economic disparities for low-income and communities of color.
5. Decrease in per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).
6. Decrease in overall combined housing and transportation costs per household.
7. Increase infill development and minimize displacement of disadvantaged populations.
8. Increased access to major employment centers for low and very low-income households.

Data required for Regional Needs Assessment

- a) Housing costs
- b) Environmental Quality (greenfield development, water infrastructure for population)
- c) Transportation Access (VMT/capita, mode share)
- d) Socioeconomic inequity (segregation and school quality)
- e) Economic Opportunity (proximity of subsidized housing to employment centers)
- f) Fresh Food Access (grocery store proximity)
- g) Healthy Communities (prevalence of preventable disease)
- h) Area of Severe Economic Distress (poverty & unemployment rates)